

CHRISTMAS ROSES

BY JOHN STONEY

I OFTEN wonder why a square yard on the allotment is not aside for a clump of Xmas Roses. Helleborus has been cultivated more or less extensively in British gardens since the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is a native of the Carpathian Mountains and has always been a cheerful plant in our gardens, producing lovely pure white flowers in December and January. I always cover my few plants with glass cloches in October, and the accompanying photograph shows a vase of flowers I photographed last Xmas. The flowers are not only suitable for vase decoration but when two or three are placed in a bowl of water, surrounded by a few leaves, they look like water-lilies. From the point of view of marketing they are always in demand for wreaths. I know one villager who has a two-lighted frame filled with Xmas roses, and makes more money out of a few square yards than the average plot-holder makes from his whole plot.

Set out the plants a foot apart, in deeply dug soil, during December, January, February or March.

ORGANIC MANURES

BY C. TABORN, F.L.S.

(County Horticultural Organiser for Nottinghamshire)

ALLOTMENT holders are finding it increasingly difficult to do dung for their gardens, and while the use of inorganic fertilisers is to be commended, it should be remembered that a certain amount of organic matter is essential for the production of humus (decayed vegetable matter). Humus is a necessary soil constituent if good crops are desired.

By rotational cropping the maximum use may be made of the limited amount of dung available. This should be applied to a section devoted to potatoes, greens, celery and onions. In the following year this land should receive inorganic manures only. The root crops, peas and beans which will follow in the rotation. The most economical method of using dung is to apply it in trenches or furrows direct. If dung is absolutely unobtainable, use should be made of other organic manures which will produce the essential humus. Green manuring is one of the most effective methods of doing this, and during the past two dry seasons (1932 and 1934) has proved especially useful in making the soils retentive of moisture. White Mustard, broadcast, 2 lbs. per 300 square yards in August after early potatoes or peas, will give excellent results if dug in during November before being damaged by frost. Giant Rape, broadcast in August, 1½ lbs. per 300 square yards, will give sufficient bulk for digging in during the following March or April. Rye may be sown broadcast in September or October for turning in during the following



Grass clippings from cricket grounds, tennis courts and lawns may be dug in green or in a rotted state. These grass clippings may be added to the compost heap with annual weeds and other garden refuse. If desired, Adco may be used on this compost heap to hasten decomposition. If applied green in the furrows for potatoes, good crops may be obtained, especially if supplemented by a balanced mixture of artificials.

Leaf mould or half-rotted leaves may be used in a similar way. Well-rotted leaf mould is valuable for top dressing the lawn, and for use on the flower borders.

More advantage should be taken of the large supplies of poultry manure now available. This should be stored in a shed or covered pit in alternate layers with dry soil. After mixing and riddling in the spring it may be applied in the trenches or used as a top dressing for established plants, at the rate of 2 to 3 cwt. per 300 square yards.

If pigs are kept, large supplies of straw should be used for litter; this will increase the bulk, absorb the urine, and make excellent manure. Advantage should be taken of waste products which may be obtainable locally. Prepared fish manure is especially useful for tomatoes under glass, but is very expensive for outdoor use. Ordinary untreated fish waste is often available near fishing ports, and may be used at the rate of 2 cwt. per 300 square yards.

Meat meal and Hoof and Horn meal are very useful, especially for lettuce and other salad crops.

Shoddy, a refuse manure from wool factories, is very effective, and may prove economical for gardeners within easy distance of the factories. A high-grade shoddy, containing 12 to 14 per cent. of nitrogen is advised. Hair meal, dried blood, damaged cakes and meals, tan-yard and slaughter-house refuse are other available sources of organic manures. Spent hops from breweries should be used, if available at a low price. Sewage sludge is useful if purchased in a fairly dry state, but is not economical if the cost of transport is high. Gardeners should remember that all these organic materials should be supplemented by a well-balanced mixture of artificials, as the following, per 300 square yards:

- 1 stone sulphate of ammonia;
- 1 stone sulphate of potash;
- 1 stone steamed bone flour;
- 2 stones superphosphate.

A LOOK ROUND THE COUNTRY

Bridgwater Association has arranged two express excursions to Blackpool for July 13th next. The Secretary informs us that 900 seats have been booked already. This seems a capital way